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Visit us on the Web at
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Crossing Organizational Boundaries: Bridges across King County

SAA Winter Meeting

Wednesday, February 26, 2003, 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
University of Washington Records Center
(former Sand Point Naval Station)
see *Directions*, page 5

Presentation

Crossing Organizational Boundaries is an innovative, collaborative project between the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI), the University of Washington Libraries (UW) and ten members of the Association of King County Historical Organizations.

AKCHO participants:

- Black Heritage Society of Washington State
- Eastside Heritage Center
- Maple Valley Historical Society
- Northwest Railway Museum
- Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society
- Rainier Valley Historical Society
- Renton Historical Museum
- Shoreline Historical Museum
- White River Valley Museum
- Wing Luke Asian Museum

see *Bridges*, page 2

Panel Participants

Rachel Howard
Project Manager

Mary Montgomery
Museum of History & Industry
Project Administrator

Kody Janney
Univ. of Washington Libraries
Project Administrator

Jacqueline Lawson
Black Heritage Society

Julie Kerssen
Project Metadata Specialist

Theo Gerontakos
Project Metadata Specialist



🌀🌀🌀 Surveying Seattle's Early Buildings 🌀🌀🌀

-Greg Lange, guest contributor

My part time job, at the Washington State Archives' Puget Sound Regional Branch, is to send out building photographs for house warming gifts, birthdays, anniversaries, historical and architectural research, etc. I work at one of the few archives in the nation that has a serious Christmas rush. Recently I have not had to travel far to my afternoon job, which entails leaving the archives staff area, signing in, and being admitted to the research area just around the corner. Awaiting me are carts full of files, which include the originals of photographs that I swear I must have sent out or refiled that very morning.

This other job consists of conducting an Early Building Survey for the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. The survey includes early Seattle buildings constructed no later than 1905. Since hardly any buildings remain from the town's first 35 years of existence, the survey is

composed almost entirely of residences constructed between 1888 and 1905.

The year 1905 was chosen because the city and the nation were at the cusp of some dramatic changes that affected house design and city development: a) Seattle's dozen bankrupt streetcar lines had just merged into one; trolley cars would be the main form of commuting for the next two to three decades. b) There were just 170 horseless carriages bogging down in the city's muddy streets; within 15 years, residents were driving 50,000 automobiles over paved arterials. c) Seattle City Light started supplying inexpensive electricity to the city's residents. d) Outdoor privies started becoming indoor bathrooms. e) Within five years, annexations doubled Seattle's land area, with a corresponding increase in population.

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Bridges - cont. from page 1

The most visible part of the project is the selection, scanning, and cataloging of 12,000 images for a website that will allow researchers to search the collections of all organizations or just a single one. Staff members from MOHAI and the UW are training AKCHO participants in such things as image selection and cataloging so that they can continue to add images and/or information to the website after the project has ended. This project will greatly expand access to the county's historical resources.

This is more than a digitization project, however, and the process is as important as the product. *Crossing Organizational Boundaries* is documenting and evaluating the collaborative process itself in order to serve as a model for other groups wishing to build cross-organizational resources.

Supported by a two-year National Leadership grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, this was one of only 15 projects in the nation funded in the Library and Museum Collaboration category in 2001.

The *Crossing Organizational Boundaries* project has now been underway for over 23 months. How is it going? What would the participants do differently? What have they learned so far that might be helpful for other groups wanting to do a similar collaborative project? Attend the Seattle Area Archivists Winter 2003 Meeting, and find out!



LAWS ONLINE

Indexes to ordinances of cities annexed to Seattle are now available on the Web.

Seattle annexed eight small municipalities between 1905 and 1910, nearly doubling the City's physical size. Online indexes to the ordinances of the cities of Ballard, Georgetown, and West Seattle are now available at <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/whatsnew.htm>. The ordinances themselves are available for use through the Seattle Municipal Archives in the Seattle City Clerk's Office.

This supplements the online index to Seattle's ordinances at <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/CBOR1.htm>, for which basic data is complete for all ordinances from the city's incorporation in 1869 to the present.

Vexing problems for records officers

thoughts from member Nancy Kroening

Say you are working with a set of applications for a scholastic program. The retention schedule indicates a one-year retention for non-accepted candidate applications. This means you are safe at the two-year mark. But, the high honcho wants to keep all the records "just in case" someone re-applies. The closet is clogged with these applications, and the program manager is becoming nervous. So, what about doing an electronic database and then shredding the records? No dice! "That would take too much time and not give us the full extent of the application." True! Now what? Any ideas? They cannot go to short-term storage in the state facilities. Do we need to relax and take deep breaths and go walk our dogs? So often we are the bearers of bad tidings---like, "Ditch them (all these records you have just worked so hard on)!" It seems to me that many, many of our challenges are due to people wanting to keep records beyond their retention periods. It's like people want us to be able to SHRINK them and put them in the size of a shoe box! In my next life, I will work on that skill!

Invite us to your place!

Host a Seattle Area Archivists meeting and reap the rewards of showing treasured collections to your colleagues, telling us about the challenges and joys of your workplace, and providing a tour of your facility. We'll bring the refreshments!

Pacific Northwest Work Projects Administration Inventory

Researchers frequently contact us here at NARA's Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle) in search of records of projects of the Work Projects Administration (WPA) or its predecessor agencies, the Civil Works Administration, Federal Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration. Unfortunately, all of the National Archives records for the activities of this agency in our region are at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. We would like to compile a list of regional WPA resources for researchers who are unable to travel to the East Coast.

Some of you may already have series of WPA records described on your web pages. Others may have finding aids for these records that are not yet in electronic form. Many area repositories are participating in the Northwest Digital Archives Project, and that will certainly be a valuable point of entry into records for those institutions as well.

WPA projects varied widely and were often carried out in cooperation with state and community resources. Do any of you have related records among your holdings? WPA workers constructed public buildings, roads, parks, and bridges. Skilled artists, writers, and others participated in the Federal Arts Project, the Federal Music Project, the Federal Theater Project, the Federal Writers' Project and the Historical Records Survey.

We are only looking for very basic information: names of relevant series, approximate volume, and types of materials included within the series. If these are records for a specific WPA program, such as the Federal Writers' Project, please include that information as well. If you do have related records that you would like to include in this inventory, please send your info to:

Valoise Armstrong
NARA's Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)
6125 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115
valoise.armstrong@nara.gov
(206) 526-6501

Everyone who participates will receive a copy of the final product.

Archives Institute To Be Held for

Native American and Tribal Archivists

The Western Archives Institute will hold an Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California, July 21-August 1, 2003. The intensive, two-week program will address specific concerns relating to the preservation of Native American and tribal records. The program will provide integrated instruction in basic archival practices to individuals with a variety of goals, including those whose jobs require a fundamental understanding of archival skills but who have little or no previous archives education, those who have expanding responsibility for Native American archival materials or anticipate working with tribal records within one year, or those who are working Native American and tribal archivists but have not received formal instruction.

The Faculty Coordinator will be Tim Ericson, Assistant Library Director for Archives and Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. He is University Archivist and directs operation of the Milwaukee-region Area Research Center, a statewide network of regional archives. He works with community and regional historical records repositories and has worked as a consultant for tribal archives projects. He also teaches archives administration courses in the university's graduate archival education program.

Other distinguished working professionals knowledgeable in particular areas of archival practice and tribal archives operation will join Professor Ericson on the faculty. In addition, the program will include site visits to local historical records repositories, including facilities with Native American and tribal collections.

The program will feature a diverse curriculum that includes developing and managing archival programs and institutions, administering personal and family collections, records management, appraisal, arrangement, description, legal issues for tribal archives, care of photographs, preservation administration, reference and access, oral history, outreach programs, and grant funding.

Admission is by application only and enrollment is limited. The application deadline for the Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists is April 15, 2003. For additional information and an application form, contact:

Administrator, Western Archives Institute
1020 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
T: 916/653-7715 FAX: 916/653-7134
E-mail: ArchivesWeb@ss.ca.gov

The application package will also be available online on the website of the Society of California Archivists at www.calarchivists.org. Click on "Western Archives Institute" to find the link to the package.

Early Buildings

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For the survey, I identified the city's earliest buildings among its 100,000 homes and selected those with minimal alterations. In nearly all United States locales, this challenge would be overwhelming. In King County, two resources allowed me to eliminate over 95% of these buildings: the King County Assessor's building database and Property Record Cards.

The Assessor's Office compiled a database on every building in the County, which includes approximate construction dates. This data is also part of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. From these records, I obtained a list of 10,000 pre-1906 Seattle buildings organized by neighborhood.

My next stop was the research room of the Puget Sound Regional Archives to do some armchair surveying through Seattle's neighborhoods. Residing at the Archives are the King County Property Record Cards, which is a collection of photographs and text that documents King County's built environment from 1937 to 1972. From 1937 to 1940, the depression-era Works Progress Administration hired unemployed men to document and photograph nearly every building in the County. After the WPA completed the survey, the King County Assessor's Office took over updating the

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records and taking photographs of not only new buildings, but also of existing buildings that had significant changes. Fortunately for historians and other researchers, the Assessor's Office saved nearly all of the "out of date" photos.

As an aside, within the next two to three years, the King County Assessor will finish transferring to the Puget Sound Regional Archives a similar collection that documents building changes through the year 2000.

Time and remodeling have not been kind to most of the Early Building survivors; porches have been removed or enclosed, windows enlarged or covered, basements dug out for garages, eaves shaved off, roofs raised, etc. The Property Record Card photographs document some of these alterations, which allowed me to eliminate half of the pre-1906 buildings. Of the remaining buildings, I am conducting fieldwork to photograph and describe those with the fewest alterations.

Residences have a relatively high mortality rate. Within the present Seattle city limits, approximately 25,000 to 28,000 homes existed in 1905. By 2002, due to growth of business, retail, and apartment districts, construction of freeways, a few ants, and an occasional house fire, only about 10,000 houses remained. There are perhaps 1,000 left with slight to moderate exterior alterations. Of these, further research will be conducted on about 100. These buildings are distributed in nearly every Seattle neighborhood, except for the northernmost two miles, which in 1905 were mainly covered by forest.

The results of the Early Building Survey will be housed at the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

When Greg Lange is not working at the Puget Sound Regional Archives, he is a freelance historian and a staff writer for Historylink.org, a King County history web page.

Directions to the new UW Records Center for SAA's Winter 2003 Meeting

From I-5 northbound:

Take the 45th Street NE exit. Make a right turn onto 45th and proceed through the University District. Stay on 45th as it goes downhill toward University Village and as it bears to the left at the bottom of the hill. Continue on 45th as it turns into Sand Point Way.

Stay on Sand Point Way to 74th Street NE (main entrance to Naval Base). At that traffic light (a 7-11 is on your left), make a right onto the old Sand Point Naval Base. At the 2nd street, make a left onto 63rd Ave NE. The Records Center is the very large (several blocks long), 4-storey brick building on your left. Come in the first door. (Park anywhere.)

From I-5 southbound:

Take the 45th Street NE exit. Make a left onto 45th and follow above directions.

From 520:

Get off at the Montlake exit. Make a right onto Montlake. Stay in your right lane. Follow Montlake past the stadium, down the street and around the curve as it turns into Sand Point Way. Then follow Sand Point Way directions above.